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AT LEAST 40 KILLED IN BOMB BLAST AT POLITICAL GATHERING IN PAK

More than 150 wounded in the blast at a gathering of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-F (JUI-F) party in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, officials said

INITIAL PROBE SAYS IT WAS SUICIDE ATTACK

At least 500 members of the party had gathered under a tent in Khar, near the border with Afghanistan. The police said as per the initial investigation it was a suicide blast. JUI-F is a hardline Islamic party with pockets of influence in the Pashtun areas of Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack, but IS has recently carried out attacks against JUI-F

BLAST COMES AS PAK PREPARES FOR POLLS

- Images circulating on social media showed bodies strewn around the scene, and volunteers helping blood-soaked victims to ambulances
- Toll may go up as at least 17 of the injured are in serious condition
- The attack comes as the Pakistan government is due to dissolve in the next few weeks ahead of elections expected in October or November

420 killed

SO FAR IN 2023 IN TERROR ATTACKS ACROSS PAK AS PER SOUTH ASIA TERRORISM PORTAL

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Situation going out of hand, warn Opposition MPs after meeting guv

Multi-party delegation of MPs submits memorandum to Manipur Governor Anusuiya Uikey

PREETHA NAIR & PRASANTA MAZUMDAR @ New Delhi / Guwahati

THE government has failed to provide relief to the people of Manipur, alleged members of the multi-party delegation of MPs of the Opposition alliance I.N.D.I.A after concluding their two-day visit to the violence-hit state. On Sunday, the 21-member delegation submitted a memorandum to Governor Anusuiya Uikey, requesting her to do the needful to restore peace and inform the Centre of the 'complete breakdown of law and order'.

The MPs, who were in the state to conduct an on-the-spot assessment of the situation, visited relief camps where people from the two communities in conflict were lodged. They said they were shocked and sad to hear the stories of the inmates. They said there was anger and a sense of alienation among all communities and this should be addressed without delay.

They also alleged that it was established beyond doubt that the state machinery failed to control the situation. The MPs said the condition in the relief camps was pathetic and stressed that special care must be taken for the children on a priority basis.

A delegation of Opposition bloc I.N.D.I.A submits a memorandum to Manipur Governor Anusuiya Uikey on their observations after visiting the state on Sunday | PTI

"Tall remarks are made in Delhi and outside the country... Nobody is bothered. There is a lack of food and medicines. Students are suffering. No effort is being made to stop the fighting between the two sides," said Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury.

Alleging that the Centre is blind to the crisis, he warned that the situation will go out of hand if not resolved soon.

"There is no trust between the two communities. There are two countries now — Kukiland and Meiteiland. They have no connection whatsoever with each other. We met the governor. She herself admitted the situation is bad," he said.

Speaking to this newspaper, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam MP Kanimozhi said that they witnessed heart-wrenching scenes during their visit to the relief camps.

"We visited three relief camps packed with hundreds of people, mostly women and small children. They get meagre food. When it rains, the water comes inside and children fall sick," she said, adding that people wanted them to speak in Parliament and tell the world about their ordeal.

TMC MP Sushmita Dev, who met two victims of sexual violence, said the women are convinced that the government is complicit. "They repeatedly said that when the police are part of a crime, they are not hopeful of justice from the administration and the CM. Even after their submission that the police were present at the crime scene, the CM did not order an inquiry," said Dev, who was part of the delegation.

TRIFURCATE THE STATE, SAYS BJP LAWMAKER

Kuki leader and BJP MLA Paolienlal Haokip said on Sunday that the only way forward in solving the situation in Manipur is by dividing the state into three Union Territories for Kukis, Meiteis and Nagas. "The way forward, as I see it, is for the Union government to give political and administrative recognition to the ethnic separation, where the state of Manipur is reorganised as three Union territories," Haokip said in an interview to PTI

PM announces mega campaign to honour martyred bravehearts

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

SEEKING to fan patriotic fervour across the country ahead of next year's general elections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday announced a mega campaign to honour martyrs. Called *Meri Mati Mera Desh* (my soil, my country), the campaign seeks to honour the country's martyred bravehearts of the country in the run-up to Independence Day.

Through the mega campaign, Modi is putting soldiers, who are upset not only about the revised pension scheme but also about Agnipath, on a pedestal. It is an attempt to bring back a wave of nationalism that gave him a second mandate after the 2019 Pulwama attack.

Announcing the launch of the campaign in the 103rd episode of his monthly radio bulletin *Mann Ki Baat*, PM Modi said an *Amrit Kalash Yatra* will be organised under the campaign and 7,500 pots carrying soil from different corners of the country will be brought to the national capital along with saplings.

The PM said special inscriptions will be installed in lakhs of villages and panchayats of the country in the memory of the braveheart men and women. Besides, a slew of programmes will be organised across the country in the memory of martyrs, he added.

"Amrit Kalash Yatra carrying soil from every corner of the country will reach Delhi. The yatra will also carry saplings from different parts of country and a big Amrit Vatika will be built near the National War Memorial by fusing the soil and saplings that would arrive in 7,500 urns," Modi said.

Recalling how the whole country came together for the Har Ghar Tiranga Yatra campaign last year, the PM called upon people to continue with the traditino of hoisting the tricolour an their houses this time as well.

"With these efforts, we will realise our duties.... we will realise the innumerable sacrifices made for the freedom of the country, we will realise the value of freedom. Hence, every person in the country must join in these efforts," he said.

TILAK AWARD

Sharad Pawar to attend event to honour PM Modi in Pune

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI @ Mumbai

AMID reports that both factions of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) will join the BJP-led governments in Maharashtra and the Centre, NCP supremo Sharad Pawar is set to be the chief guest at an event in Pune where Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be conferred with Lokmanya Tilak National Award.

Earlier, Rohit Tilak, great grand-son of Bal Gangadhar Tilak and the vice president of the Tilak Smarak Mandir Trust, which organises the award, said Pawar has confirmed that he will preside over the event.

In fact, Pawar later said it was he who helped Tilak to get the prime minister's date for the event.

Modi is being conferred the award in recognition of his "supreme leadership" and for "awakening the feeling of patriotism among citizens".

Meanwhile, Opposition parties hit out at Pawar saying while he is helping the Opposition alliance, I.N.D.I.A, take on the BJP in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, he himself is attending as chief guest in a function where Modi will be praised.

"We really failed in understanding the Pawar's politics. Actually. He should drop his decision to attend as chief guest in the event in which Modi will be conferred with Lokmanya Tilak National Award," a senior Congress leader said, adding it is "not a good optics" by Pawar at this juncture.

Interestingly, the NCP faction led by Pawar will join the Congress and social activists in showing the black flag to Modi during his Pune visit over his silence on the violence in Manipur.

EXPRESS READ

Soldier on leave goes missing, search begins

Srinagar: An Army soldier, Javaid Ahmad Wani, on leave has gone missing from his native Kulgam in Jammu and Kashmir, leading to the forces launching a massive search and rescue operation, officials said on Sunday. P8

Gruha Jyothi to be rolled out in K'buragi on Aug 5

Shivamogga: The Gruha Jyothi scheme, where 200 units of free power will be provided to households, will be rolled out in Kalaburgi on August 5, said Energy Minister KJ George at Chikkamagaluru on Sunday. P4

This is a year of exciting missions, says ISRO chief

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

INDIAN Space Research Organisation (ISRO) announced that the next year is packed with several "exciting" missions. Another PSLV mission is in the pipeline, along with a Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV) mission and a Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) coming up later this year, Chairman S Somanath said on Sunday.

He was speaking to the press after the successful launch of PSLV-C56 carrying DS-SAR as the primary satellite, along with six co-passengers launched on Sunday from the launch pad of Sriharikota at 6:30am.

"We will be launching another PSLV mission by August or early September. In the future, PSLVs will be industrialised and owned by different industries," Somanath announced.

He added that Gaganyaan's test vehicle is currently being integrated for an ambitious human spaceflight with three crew members, who will be in space for three days. The SSLV mission is in its third developmental mission and GSLV mission for launching INSAT-3DS is also in progress.

"This year we are packed with activities," the space agency chairman added. P4

ISRO's PSLV-C56 lifts off from the launch pad at Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota on Sunday | PTI

> The government came to power only because 135 of us (party MLAs) won the election. They became ministers only because our government came to power. The ministers should know that they did not descend from above

BR Patil, Congress MLA from Aland

Writing letter no crime: Cong MLA Patil

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Belagavi

IF the way Congress senior MLA from Aland BR Patil hit out at the reported "unfair" treatment of party MLAs by some cabinet ministers is any indication, then it is evident that the Congress government is facing a bitter internal feud between party MLAs and ministers.

Patil told *The New Indian Express*, "The government came to power only because 135 of us (party MLAs) won the election. They became ministers only because our government came to power. The ministers should know that they did not descend from above."

Taking a dig at the ministers' conduct with legislators, he said, "If my self-respect is hurt, I will resign from my post and quit. That's how I am going to protest." But he did not mention the names of the ministers he was upset with and said he does not like to comment on it.

On reports that the MLAs tendered an apology for writing the letter to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah against the cabinet ministers, Patil said he never apologised nor he would do such a thing. "Is writing letters to the CM (against ministers) a crime? I don't think it is a crime. It is our democratic right to write letters. There is democracy prevailing in the party." Patil said he was not aware who were the MLAs who apologised, but he did not.

Recently, Siddaramaiah held a Congress Legislature Party meeting to set the house in order after the party MLAs wrote a letter to him complaining against some cabinet ministers.

Ahead of nominations for WFI poll, Brij Bhushan may meet Amit Shah

FIROZ MIRZA @ Chennai

WITH Monday being the last date to submit nominations for the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) election, the sidelined chief of the body Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh held a meeting with his loyalists at a five-star hotel in New Delhi on Sunday. It is learnt that representatives from 21 state units attended the meeting and pledged their allegiance to Singh, a BJP member of parliament from Kaiserganj, UP.

As per the WFI constitution, two representatives from a state unit are eligible to cast their votes. With 21 units backing him, the election should have been a cakewalk for Singh. However, the UP strongman preferred to play it safe by not revealing the nominations. Also because of the sensitive nature of this election with sexual harrassment charges against Singh, things could be tricky. If insiders are to be believed, Singh had met the Home Minister in this regard and is expected to meet him again. "Singh may meet home minister either at night or in the morning before his faction files the nominations for various posts at the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) Bhawan on Monday," sources told this daily.

The sources also claimed that the other faction, which comprises six-seven voters who were included in the electoral college of late, also had a round of talks on Sunday. "They cannot be taken lightly as some of the names were accommodated after extending the deadline of nominations. They could figure as contestants for top poitions," said sources. P11

No more Nandini ghee in Tirupati laddus

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Ballari

AFTER nearly 50 years, the Tirupati Tirumala Trust (TTD) will not buy ghee from Karnataka Milk Federation (KMF) to make its famous laddus.

KMF president Bhima Nayak said here on Sunday that TTD did not approve the price quoted by KMF and has gone ahead with another company to source ghee. The agreement is ending despite TTD having said several times that the laddus taste better because of KMF ghee.

"We demanded a higher price for ghee as the milk procurement price will go up from August 1. But TTD informed us through the e-procurement site that it has picked a company that has quoted the lowest price. KMF ghee has an international market because of its quality. If any company has bid at a low price, I know they will compromise on quality. It is clear, however, that Nandini ghee plays a major role in making laddus tasty," he added.

Tomatoes worth ₹21 lakh shipped from Kolar to Jaipur go missing

V VELAYUDHAM @ Kolar

AS tomato prices keep soaring, over 11 tonnes of the vegetable worth Rs 21 lakh, being transported from Kolar to Jaipur, has gone missing. Kolar SP M Narayan told *The New Indian Express* that a case has been registered with the Kolar town police based on a complaint filed by trader Munireddy.

Munireddy of Sree Venkateshwara Traders told *TNIE* that he and AG Traders had sent 735 crates, with 15 kg each, in a truck to three traders in Jaipur. He said he had purchased each crate of tomato at Rs 2,000 to Rs 2,150 and had loaded the crates on July 27 afternoon.

The driver's number, the vehicle registration number and other details were shared with the Jaipur traders. He and the Jaipur traders were tracking the consignment regularly.

The truck was scheduled to reach Jaipur at 11 pm on July 29. But from late Saturday evening, the driver could not be contacted and even the GPS tracker on the truck did not show any movement, he said.

CONTINUED ON: P6

12% GST slapped on PG rentals, hostel fees

NAMRATA SINDWANI @ Bengaluru

PEOPLE staying in paying guest (PGs) accommodations and hostels may soon have to shell out more as 12 per cent GST will be slapped on rent paid for such accommodations and other services separately.

The Authority for Advance Ruling (AAR) in Bengaluru ruled on July 13 that hostels are not residential dwelling units and are not exempt from GST.

In an advance ruling sought by Srisai Luxurious Stay LLP, AAR said GST exemption was applicable to accommodation services of charges up to Rs 1,000 per day, provided by hotels, clubs, campsites etc. till July 17, 2022.

"GST on reverse charge will be applicable on the rental to be paid to the landowners by the applicant as the services of the applicant are leviable to GST and thus the applicant has to obtain GST registration," it added. The Bengaluru bench also stated that other services like TV, or washing machine will not be bundled services and hence GST will be charged separately on them. In a similar case by Noida-based VS Institute and Hostel, the Lucknow AAR bench said GST will be applicable on hostel rooms costing less than Rs 1,000 per day.

Sampath Althur, president, Bengaluru PG Owners Association, said, "It is unfair to allow GST to be made applicable on rental housing as the effect of increased cost of rent will trickle down to students and other migrants residing in the city.

CONTINUED ON: P5